

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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Action

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Classification

Control: 16518

Rec'd: JANUARY 30, 1961  
9:29 P.M.

SS

Info

FROM: MOSCOW

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 1797, JANUARY 30, 6 P.M.

EYES ONLY

*President  
has seen  
to*

EYES ONLY SECRETARY.

IN NON-POLITICAL FIELDS THIS EMBASSY CHIEFLY SUPPLIER RAW MATERIALS AND NOT STAFFED TO ATTEMPT FINISHED INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES. NEVERTHELESS I AM BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONVINCED WE ARE GROSSLY OVER ESTIMATING SOVIET MILITARY STRENGTH RELATIVE TO OURS.

I OF COURSE AM NOT PRIVY TO ALL OUR INTELLIGENCE ON THIS SUBJECT THOUGH I DO SEE MUCH OF END PRODUCT. IT SEEMS TO ME THIS OVER ESTIMATE HAS RESULTED FROM NATURAL TENDENCY OUR MILITARY TO ASSESS ENEMY'S CAPABILITIES AT MAXIMUM AS MAY BE ONLY PRUDENT FROM THIS POINT OF VIEW. OTHER FACTORS HAVE BEEN US SERVICE COMPETITION FOR FUNDS, OUR UNDER ESTIMATION THEIR CAPABILITIES IN PAST, SOVIET FORCEFUL EXPLOITATION OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS IN ATOMIC, MISSILE AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY.

I SHALL NOT ATTEMPT GO INTO EVIDENCE THAT LEADS TO MY CONCLUSION BUT HOPE HAVE OPPORTUNITY DISCUSS THIS UPON MY RETURN WASHINGTON. IT CLEARLY NOT MY PROVINCE ATTEMPT ESTIMATE OUR MILITARY NEEDS AND I AM IN ANY EVENT CONVINCED WE MUST MAINTAIN STRONG MILITARY POSTURE ALONG WITH ATTEMPT REACH PRACTICAL MEASURES REDUCE OR ELIMINATE ARMAMENTS. FROM POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW WOULD HOPE WE WOULD CONCENTRATE ON SECOND-STRIKE CAPABILITY AND MAKE CLEAR DOING SO.

WISH POINT OUT HOWEVER OUR ESTIMATE SOVIET MILITARY CAPABILITIES ALSO AFFECTS OUR (1) ESTIMATE THEIR INTENTIONS IN POLITICAL FIELD, (2) FORMULATION OUR OWN POLICIES TO MEET OUR ESTIMATE OF THEIR CAPABILITIES AND INTENTIONS AND (3) OUR

ESTIMATE THEIR  
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Stat. 1/14/78 WLS-75-26

E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (F)

By NFO NARS, Date 2/1/78

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EYES ONLY

*1 Orig to Mr. Bundy*

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-2- 1797, JANUARY 30, 6 P.M. FROM MOSCOW

ESTIMATE THEIR REACTIONS OUR POLICIES AND ACTIONS.

AMONG OTHER THINGS I THINK RE (1) THAT BECAUSE OF EMPHASIS ON DANGER IN MILITARY FIELD WE HAVE TENDED UNDER ESTIMATE SERIOUSNESS OF THREAT IN POLITICAL. RE (2) I THINK WE SOMETIMES REACT IN MILITARY WAY TO SOVIET POLITICAL ACTIONS WHICH IN TURN HELPS THEM ACHIEVE POLITICAL OBJECTIVES. RE (3) IF SOVIETS AS RELATIVELY WEAK MILITARILY AS I SUSPECT, THEIR REACTION TO SAMOS, ATTITUDE TOWARD INSPECTION, ETC. WOULD BE QUITE DIFFERENT THAN IF THEY ARE AS STRONG AS WE GIVE THEM CREDIT FOR. (WHILE I AM CONVINCED WE SHOULD PROCEED WITH SAMOS I BELIEVE ITS USE WILL REQUIRE MOST CAREFUL PREPARATION AND HANDLING).

IT MAY BE THAT WE NEED TWO ESTIMATES OF SOVIET MILITARY CAPABILITIES, ONE FOR PURELY MILITARY USE IN DETERMINING OUR OWN DEFENSE NEEDS, AND OTHER AS BASIS FOR POLICY DETERMINATIONS, PARTICULARLY IN POLITICAL FIELD, IN WHICH CASE WE COULD BE MORE REALISTIC AND NOT ALLOW SUCH WIDE MARGINS FOR SECURITY REASONS.

THOMPSON

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